From: Mike Stone
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/18/02 11:24am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

It's my belief that at least one point has been missed in the Government's
position. The Government's contention, as I understand it, is that
Microsoft is using it's operating system monopoly to unfairly gain dominance
in internet browsers. That browser dominance would then secure their
operating system monopoly. Although I believe that this is the case, I also
believe that their is more to Microsoft's attempt to gain browser dominance.
The internet is a relatively young (at least the www portion of it)
development which as of now no one controls. Internet standards are agreed
upon and approved by a committee of various internet entities. If a company
wants to put out proprietary software for the internet and charge for it
there is a good chance that internet users will find a free alternative. If
a company has a monopoly in the browser they are also the only company that
can ignore the committees standards and use their own. Once they have
established their dominance with internet standards they can market their
for-profit products (Windows 2000, site server, etc.) as the only products
that guarantee internet compliance since they would decide what complies.
This would then help them gain dominance in other areas. This is the path
that Microsoft has time and again chosen. Gain dominance in the operating
system market and then scare consumers into thinking that if you are not
using their operating system, then you won't be compatible with the rest of
the world. Same with their office suite. For as much talk as Microsoft
makes about innovating, I can't think of a single product that they make
that wasn't made by another company before them. Windows = Macintosh OS;
Word = WordPerfect; Excel =Lotus 123; Internet Explorer = Netscape; etc.
They don't innovate, they copy and then bully people into using their
versions through fear that they won't be able to do what everyone else can
do. It's another reason they don't let competition in on the same Windows
APIs that they use in application development.

I believe that breaking them up is the wrong idea (and was glad when you
dropped that as an option). I think the best thing to do is make Microsoft
release it's Windows APIs to application developers so they can compete on a
level playing field. In addition I would require them to develop their
browsers to only the commonly agreed upon standards of the internet for the
next 5 years. This gives the internet a chance to mature in an open
competitive way, instead of just following Microsoft's "innovations."

Thanks

Mike Stone